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Letter dated 24 June 2005 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

Following my recent visit to the Sudan and my briefing to the Security Council on 2 June 2005, I should like to draw your attention once again to the urgent need for additional donor support for that country. While many generous contributions have been made, large shortfalls remain for all sectors and areas of the country. It is expected that the outstanding needs for the remainder of the year — which are to be revised in the coming weeks — will exceed US$ 1 billion. Unless these shortfalls are addressed promptly, I very much fear that grave humanitarian consequences will ensue and that the long-awaited peace may be jeopardized.

The Sudan's humanitarian needs are enormous and are increasing. More than six million people will need emergency food aid in order to survive the next few months. But just as the country enters a period of food shortage, which coincides with the rainy season, the World Food Programme faces a funding shortfall of more than US$ 300 million. We estimate that, in August, operations in the southern and eastern parts of the country and in the transitional areas — which target 3.2 million people — will experience significant interruptions in food supplies.

We have identified areas with alarming malnutrition rates. Some areas are at risk of a disaster similar to the Bahr al Ghazal famine of 1998. Several sectors, including health, water and sanitation which are crucial for saving lives, have not received sufficient donor support.

At the same time, needs are increasing as tens of thousands of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) are returning to the south and the transitional areas. These are among the poorest and least developed areas in the world and they desperately need assistance — food, water, agricultural supplies, shelter and help with education — in order to be able to absorb those returning to their homes. Voluntary returns are expected to accelerate after the rainy season and to reach 1.2 million this year, so we must start now to position the necessary supplies, build up capacity across the south, set up way stations and repair essential transport routes. None of this can happen without immediate and generous donor support.

In Darfur, the significant progress we have made in addressing humanitarian needs is being jeopardized by inadequate funding. Unless we can continue to expand our operations, conditions in the IDP camps could deteriorate, and more and more people in rural areas may be forced to leave their homes in search of assistance. Many people have already died of hunger in Darfur and malnutrition rates are rising in several areas. This trend must be reversed and our achievements sustained; that

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will require a relief effort of epic proportions. At the same time we must redouble our efforts to meet needs in the east and to mitigate the risk of an escalation of the conflict in that area.

If we fail to meet these challenges now, the political consequences could haunt us for many years. Most worryingly, the great hope for peace in the Sudan as a whole — the Comprehensive Peace Agreement — could be placed in serious jeopardy. The international support needed for its implementation has yet to materialize. A civil administration is urgently needed in the south of the country, not only to begin providing basic services but also to strengthen the peace. If those returning to the south cannot sustain themselves and are forced to leave a second time, people's confidence in the peace will be seriously shaken.

At its historic meeting in Nairobi, on 19 November 2004, the Security Council called for humanitarian assistance to be delivered to the Sudan as soon as the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (see Security Council resolution 1574 (2004)) was signed. It has now been more than five months since the Agreement was signed — on 9 January 2005 — and more than two months have elapsed since donors pledged more than $4.5 billion at the Oslo Conference. A large percentage of the pledges made this year have yet to materialize and more pledges for immediate assistance are urgently needed.

Much has been said about the historic opportunity presented by the Comprehensive Peace Agreement and about the importance of an immediate peace dividend for its success. It is now time for donors to deliver. The time for setting new challenges or defining new conditions for financing has passed; any further delay will be measured in lives lost and will jeopardize the long-awaited peace.

I should be grateful if you would bring this letter to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Kofi A. **Annan**